

# Mine Blast Toll Rises to Eight

*Special to The Inquirer*

WILKES-BARRE, Pa., Dec. 12.—The last survivor of the Franklin Colliers explosion died here tonight, bringing the death toll to eight.

Edmund Orjeski, 42, of Mountain Top, Pa., succumbed to burns in Wilkes-Barre General Hospital from the effects of the twin explosion yesterday in the Lehigh Valley Coal Co.'s mine at Franklin, three miles from here.

John Gasper, 25, of Mountain Top, died at 6:55 A. M. in the same hospital. Five hours before that, searchers at the scene of the explosion brought out the body of Michael Gudaitis, 66, who until then had been the only one unaccounted for.

## INQUIRY OPENED

Two blasts in rapid succession, 1000 feet underground, instantly killed Stephen Sillup, 47, of Ashley; Frank Chudlio, 54, of Scranton; Ignatz Skzynecki, 53, of Wilkes-Barre township, and Roger Jones, 41, of Kingston. Caspar Pulak, 24, of Wilkes-Barre, died last night.

Meanwhile an inquiry was opened by State and Federal agencies. Joseph Walsh, deputy State Mines Secretary, ordered a three-man commission to the scene. The colliery was ordered to remain closed until declared safe for operation.

## IMPROVEMENTS ORDERED

At the same time, Walsh declared that "an all-time low fatality frequency" will be established this year in the State's anthracite mines, despite three explosions, causing 32 deaths, in Luzerne county.

The U. S. Mines Department disclosed that earlier recommendations for improved safety conditions were repeated in the last inspection of the Franklin Colliery last June, but added that no particularly hazardous conditions were reported.